

# THE IMPACT OF GLOBALIZATION ON AFRICAN CONFLICTS

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## ABSTRACT

### THE IMPACT OF GLOBALIZATION ON AFRICAN CONFLICTS

by MAJ Jonathan Addo, 63 pages.

There is no region of this world that not experienced wars, but while many parts of the world have moved towards greater political and economic stability and co-operation, sub-Saharan Africa remains a cauldron of instability and economic deprivation. Globalization, which in simple terms means a worldwide network of interdependence, is a phenomenon, which emerged at the end of the Cold War and the advent of the information revolution. While economic interdependence and liberalization has been acclaimed as the only hope for prosperity for the world, it has also been blamed as source of conflict in many parts of the world. This thesis examines the nexus between globalization and contemporary African conflicts with case studies of conflict scenarios in four African countries namely, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Sierra Leone, Nigeria and Guinea to ascertain the extent to which globalization played a role in sustaining these conflicts.

The conclusion of this dissertation is that contemporary African conflicts have both national and international underpinnings, and include political, social and economic parameters. On the socio-political side, the conflicts are directly related to the circumstances surrounding the acquisition of independence, the multiethnic composition of the states, and the more often cited causes generally subsumed under the generic label governance. It also shows that the increased liberalization and expansion of international trade, which occurred in the aftermath of the Cold War, has exacerbated the level and intensity of the conflicts in three of the countries analyzed.

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
THESIS APPROVAL PAGE .....	ii
ABSTRACT .....	iii
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS.....	iv
CHAPTER1: INTRODUCTION.....	1
Definition/Explanation of Key Terms.....	1
Thesis Question .....	3
Background to the Study.....	4
Theoretical Framework.....	11
Motivation.....	13
CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW AND RESEARCH METHODOLOGY...	15
Literature Review.....	15
Research Methodology.....	22
CHAPTER 3: ANALYSIS OF THE PROBLEM.....	24
Introduction.....	24
Views on Causes of Contemporary African Conflicts.....	24
The External Factor.....	24
The African Perspective .....	26
Views from the North.....	28
Case Study of Conflict Dynamics in Selected Countries.....	30
The Democratic Republic of Congo.....	31
Sierra Leone: A Case of Conflict Diamonds.....	36
Nigeria: A case of Environmental Conflict.....	41
Guinea: A Suppressed Civil War.....	45
Effects of Conflicts on the Future of African Nation-States.....	46
CHAPTER 4: CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS.....	51
Conclusions.....	51
Recommendations.....	55
REFERENCE LIST .....	59
DISTRIBUTION LIST .....	61
CERTIFICATION FOR MMAS DISTRIBUTION STATEMENT.....	62

## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

#### Definition/Explanation of Key Terms

Joseph S. Nye, JR., a lecturer at Harvard University defined globalization as a “worldwide networks of interdependence” (Nye 2003, 186). Interdependence is often a fuzzy term used in a variety of conflicting ways. For the purpose of this research, it refers to situations in which actors or events in different parts of a system affect each other. Simply put, it means mutual dependence. Such a situation is neither good nor bad in itself, and there can be more or less of it. Interdependence among nations sometimes means richer, sometimes poorer, sometimes for better, sometimes for worse as in personal relationships such as the marriage vow (196).

These international networks according to Nye are increasingly becoming complex and their effects are increasingly unpredictable. Moreover, as in all human systems, people are often hard at work trying to outwit each other, to gain an economic, social or military advantage by acting in an unpredictable way (190). As a result, globalization is accompanied by pervasive uncertainty as there is continual competition between increased complexity and uncertainty on the one hand and efforts by governments, corporations and others to comprehend and manipulate to their benefit these increasingly complex interconnected systems (190).

While globalization has been going on for centuries, its contemporary form is, according to Nye, “thicker and quicker” (189). Globalization today is different from the nineteenth century when European imperialism provided much of its political structure, and higher transport and communication costs meant fewer people were involved directly

with people and ideas from other cultures. Many of the important differences are closely related to the increment in interconnectedness as a result of the information revolution, the liberalization and expansion of international trade, decreased role of governments in business and finance, and the ease with which technology has assisted the transfer of funds across borders. Thomas Friedman therefore argues, “contemporary globalization goes farther, faster, cheaper, and deeper” (Friedman 1999,7). Globalization has made national boundaries more porous but not irrelevant. It has also implied the shrinking of distances, but those distances have shrunk at different rates for different people, and on different issues.

Writing on globalization in *Strategic Paradigms 2025: US Strategic Planning for a New Era*, Jacquelyn Davis and Michael Sweeney explained globalization to mean “the increasing level of global interdependence and interaction in economic affairs” (Davis and Sweeney 1999, 14). They noted that the phenomenon came to the fore at the end of the Cold War in both government statements and journal articles on the break up of the Soviet Union, and when the economies of those countries began to be liberalized.

The common theme that runs through these definitions is *interdependence*, *interaction*, and *interconnectedness*. It is noteworthy also that the new globalization is a post cold war syndrome, when states of the former Soviet Union and East Europe discontinued with economic autarkic policies and opened up their economies to the rest of the world, and when the relative loss of control of these states by the governments led to the export and proliferation of weaponry, especially small arms, to other parts of the world.

There is no corner of the globe and no society that is without conflicts. But while many parts of the world have moved towards greater political and economic stability and co-operation, Africa remains a cauldron of instability and economic depression. For the purpose of this thesis, I have used the word conflict mostly to mean armed violence, but may also be used on occasions to mean latent, simmering displeasure with some aspects of the general way of life of a group of people or community, which has the potential of exploding into armed violence.

#### Thesis Question

The primary question of this thesis is whether globalization has exacerbated conflicts in sub Saharan Africa. In effect, the hypothesis to be tested is that increased interdependence or interconnectedness as a result of the information revolution, and the liberalization and expansion of international trade and finance, has increased the level and intensity of armed violence in sub Saharan Africa. It is important to stress that while most African countries have latent conflicts, such as those relating to leadership, identity, participation and legitimacy (details of these will be explained in chapter 3), where these conflicts have exploded into armed violence the level and intensity has been exacerbated by one or more aspects of globalization such as the increased liberalization of trade, for example. Secondary questions that arise and to be answered are:

1. What is the nature of contemporary African conflicts?
2. What role has outside economic interests played in these conflicts?
3. What is the future of sub Saharan African nation-states in this midst of an increasingly liberalized and interconnected world?



I must caveat that this dissertation is not meant to condemn trade liberalization; neither is it meant to support anti globalization activism. Globalization has its positive sides but its consequences on the development of a more peaceful world remain a subject of debate. As in all human endeavors, there are downsides to every phenomenon and indeed there are those countries that loose out, fall off the bandwagon and become more vulnerable. Since there are many African countries and there is a limitation on time and space for this thesis, a study on the impact of globalization on armed conflicts in four African countries, namely Sierra Leone, Nigeria, Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and Guinea will be done.

#### Background to the Study

To fully understand the political and economic conditions of African countries in general, it is necessary to revisit recent African history. This background will examine the impact of the Cold War era, and the influence of systemic changes on Africa's political and economic fortunes. A critical analysis of the current geostrategic security environment will also be made, since a thorough knowledge of these will enable the reader of this dissertation to better appreciate the implications of the past and present on Africa's armed conflicts.

The Cold War era was characterized by a bipolar world political system dominated by the United States and the former Soviet Union, which wielded formidable influence on world stability. There was an ideological, economic and military conflict between the East and West, between communism and democracy. The superpowers often became the shadowy, often secret, participants in most inter and intrastate conflicts and supported dictators in Africa in order to further their ideological and geostrategic

interests. Not surprisingly, military rule and civilian dictatorial governments were a common phenomenon during the cold war era. Notable among these was the late President Mobutu Sesesekou of the then Zaire who, despite flagrant human rights abuses, corruption and reckless extravagance, was supported by United States governments until 1997 when he was ousted from power by the late Laurent Kabila. In the same vein, the Soviets supported Eduardo dos Santos of Angola, another dictator, in one of the most brutal and longest civil wars in Africa (Baffour 1994, 15). A consequence of these superpower interventions was that democracy did not thrive in many parts of Africa, with resultant political instability and stagnant economic growth (17)

The destruction of the Berlin Wall, which defined the end of the Cold War, brought euphoria of hope for a new world order in which humankind was expected to live in harmony and peace. Africans expected a decline in conflicts and the creation of a congenial environment for economic development. In Eastern Europe, one party rule and centrally controlled economies, and the long suppressed aspirations of ethnic minorities within these societies were loosened. In most societies, the collective power of people to shape their own future was greater than before and the need to exercise it became more compelling.

In Africa, the wind of change had exerted pressure for democratic governance. The process was, unfortunately in some cases, presided over by incumbent leaders who became democrats for convenience rather than conviction. A case in point is military ruler Jerry John Rawlings of Ghana, who has publicly stated time and again that he did not believe in multi-party democracy, though he stood for multiparty elections twice and won. Apparently, he wanted to continue ruling in a dispensation he did not have faith in,

in order to satisfy creditor nations and multilateral organizations that demanded such elections as conditions for the granting of loans and grants.

But the euphoria did not last, as renewed threats to world security came to the fore. Though the end of the superpower competition eased some of the conflicts, new conflict scenarios emerged in Africa and elsewhere, which became more complex and the arena crowded with new actors. The scourge of conflicts and wars continued in some countries because the internal contradictions, which had to do with the ethnic composition of the nation-states and associated leadership problems, and which contributed to latent conflicts during the cold war era, persisted. The new world order has seen the resurgence of parochial identities based on ethnic and religious allegiance, and the rise of new economic forces. Turbulent events have occurred in Africa, for example, because the superpower rivalry, which was an important restraint on intrastate war, was weakened by the new order. The civil wars in Rwanda, Sierra Leone, Somalia and Liberia can be attributed, among others, to some of these internal contradictions that exploded after the end of the Cold War.

Africa is the most war torn continent in contemporary times, and is characterized by poverty and political instability. It is afflicted by a growing number of intrastate conflicts mostly of ethnic derivation. Increasing numbers of civilians, as opposed to the military, have become involved in this violence. These instances of turmoil are the local and particular manifestations of a common crisis of individual and group identity in the context of deepening social inequality and fragmentation. Some governments have lost the ability to control pent-up discontent. In states with relatively strong economies and civil societies, this has sparked pressure for increased government accountability and

popular participation. In less resilient states, the devolution of state power has led to collapse, fragmentation and violence. Many countries tumbled into anarchy in the 1990s and are only now slowly building order. Others have spent years trying to wrest control of the hinterlands from rebel warlords. But social unrest and violence are not the only serious threats.

The natural environment also poses many significant challenges. Such threats range from environmental degradation, epidemic diseases, to natural disasters such as drought, desertification, and catastrophic floods. Humans and nature still live in a precarious balance, with the balance often tipped against the most vulnerable members. Africans contend with a host of other environmental problems that pose significant long-term threats to their health and livelihood.

Economically most African states are burdened by the legacies of the past. As European powers developed their colonies, they did not seek to create self-sustaining markets. Instead, they designed economies that would produce primary products for export and depend on their colonial masters for manufactured goods. Poor economic decisions made by African leaders after independence exacerbated the problems they inherited. In contrast to the “Asian” economic model, with its focus on financial and budgetary discipline, private sector participation, and integration into the global economy, most African states pursued alternative development strategies. These were often state-centric and, because of the sensitivity to dependence, were designed for self-sufficiency rather than for integration into the global economy. At the same time, many African bureaucracies were used for patronage rather than for efficient administration. They thus tended to be exceptionally bloated with excess personnel, causing persistent

and debilitating budgetary deficits. In effect, Africa's development problems are both post-colonial and perennial in nature.

Industrial projects were supported by external borrowing and controlled by the state, thus stifling the growth of an entrepreneurial class in the formal sector. African borrowing has been so extensive that debt servicing has sometimes equaled 25 percent of sub-Saharan Africa's export earnings (Cornwell 1999, 4). Of the thirty six low income nations that the World Bank rates as severely indebted, twenty nine are in sub-Saharan Africa; twenty three have a debt burden greater than their gross national product. Ironically, much of the capital that flows into Africa ends up in the overseas bank accounts of the regions leaders (5). The capital held overseas by Africans is equivalent to 39 percent of the region's gross domestic product, compared to 6 percent for Asia (5).

This discourse will be incomplete without examining economic trends and re-alignments in the post-Cold War era. Networks of economic interdependence that spanned the globe have increased as costs of communications and transportation have declined and shrunk the effect of distance. The role of markets has also increased as a result of new information and transportation technologies as well as changed attitudes about the role of government and states. Nearly half of all industrial production today is produced by multinational enterprises whose decisions about where to locate production have a powerful effect on domestic economies and politics (Nye 2003, 187). Dan Rodrik, an economist, points out that economic globalization is "exposing a deep fault line between groups who have the skills and ability to flourish in global markets and those who don't" (Rodrik 1997, 2).

Economics and politics are closely intertwined aspects of international relations. Each is a part of and affects the other. An area of international economics that needs analysis here is the issue of regional integration schemes. These schemes have assumed added impetus of late. Integration aims at the creation and expansion of inter regional trade as a stimulus for economic and social development and political stability. This phenomenon seems to contradict recent trends where all countries, whatever their stage or level of development, are bound by international obligation by being part of international organizations like the World Trade Organization (WTO), to open up their markets to competition and be integrated into the global market. This is also against the background that African countries have less clout in negotiating at conferences to regulate trade leaving them signing on to agreements that do not properly serve their interests. For example, members of the WTO are required to reduce subsidies on agriculture while European Union members continue to pay large subsidies to their farmers.

On the financial side, though the amount in investment capital has grown world wide, only about 2.5 percent of Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) flows into Africa (Mazrui, 2002, 5). Within the overall expansion of the international economy, there is a pattern in which most of the trade, investment and other aspects of international economics are dominated by a few countries and work to their advantage. Foreign aid is negligible compared with world needs, and is often given on the basis of political expediency rather than economic necessity.

I had earlier inferred that poverty is one of the factors that have destabilized sub Saharan Africa politically. This may be so because where there has always been mass

poverty, people in some societies find liberation in violence (8). Physical aggression, it is said, is a part of human beings and that it is when people attain a certain economic, educational and cultural standard that this trait is tranquilized (8). This is an arguable assertion though, but the fact still remains that people who have no hope in the future easily fall prey to relatively wealthier persons with deceitful and sometimes violent political agendas, and get them indoctrinated to do things they ordinarily will not do. Ali Mazrui asserts that in the light of the fact that 95 percent of the earth's population growth will be in the poorest areas of the globe, the question is not whether there will be conflicts or wars, but what kind of wars, and who will fight those. In other words, what will be the fate of African countries if globalization has indeed exacerbated armed conflicts on the continent? Since it is a phenomenon that has come to stay, will Africans continue to fight each other in the light of the poverty that continues to afflict them?

Other threats to security such as religious fanaticism and international terrorism, are gaining currency in Africa of late. In Nigeria, for example, some states in the northern part of the country have enacted legislation that has recognized Islamic religious laws since 1999. This has been a source of armed conflicts leading to many fatalities. This could not have happened in the cold war era, and it was unthinkable then for one part of the country to have a different set of laws from other parts. This has come about as a result of another dimension of globalization in which events in one part of the world are increasingly replicated in other parts with relative ease. The future of a cohesive Nigeria is a matter of concern now as some states are threatening to leave the federation, an issue that is one of the remote causes of the Niger Delta conflict to be discussed later.

The actions of Islamic fanatics have been a source of threat to global peace and stability, as Islamic zealotry has led to policies that contradict all norms of universally accepted behavior. A woman accused of adultery is currently awaiting punishment for a sentence of death by stoning in a Northern Nigerian state. Akin to this is the increase in organized terrorism, which is also partly a byproduct of the kind of political and socio-economic upheavals experienced in many parts of the world in the aftermath of the cold war. In Africa, ethnic and religious divisions, economic deprivation and security problems, along with relatively weak governments, can help to nourish terrorist activities.

### Theoretical Framework

Underpinning every phenomenon or occurrence in the international stage are theories that help explain it. There are two views on the concept of international political economy, which have always been a source of conflict, and which impact on underdeveloped economies such as in African countries. *Liberalism* is the basis of those who believe in economic internationalism. These are idealists who think that economic relations should and can be harmonious because prosperity is available to all, and is most likely to be achieved and preserved through cooperation. Liberals opine that prosperity can be created by freeing economic interchange from political restrictions (Rourke 2000, 214), and argue that countries that are heavily dependent on the global economy, whether measured by trade or investment, are likely to experience higher economic growth, greater affluence, more democracy, and increasingly peaceful conditions at home and therefore reduce conflict.

The second school of thought, known as *structuralists* believe that world politics is based on the division of the world into have and have-not countries. Structuralists



stress reform of the current market system by ending a system known as *dependencia* (216). Dependency theorists believe that from a historical perspective, developing countries neither have nor control the means of production. They have always been at the periphery of the world economy, depending on the capitalist world at the core for trade, capital, technical and managerial skills. The central proposition of the theory is that the relationship between the advanced capitalist societies and developing countries in the world political economy is exploitative (217). This school also thinks that the North never had to contend with colonialism or a world full of richer, more powerful competitors and that it is unfair to compare contemporary Third World societies with the North in the early stages of development. In sharp contrast to the liberals, most dependency theorists argue that high levels of trade and investment tend to generate economic inequality. Relative deprivation theory suggests that such inequality will increase the risk of political instability and conflict.

Whether or not one subscribes to any of these theories, it is clear that the world is divided into two economic spheres; rich and poor countries. African countries belong to the latter. There are some rich individual Africans, but generally speaking the vast majority of the people and countries of Africa are less developed economically. These contending theorists offer different explanations to why the relative deprivation of Africa exists and also have varying prescriptions for finding remedies to the North-South gap in economic development.

It may also be necessary to use conflict theories to help understand the country studies for this thesis to be undertaken in subsequent chapters. In 1835, de Tocqueville expressed the view that “almost all the revolutions which have changed the aspect of

nations have been made to consolidate or to destroy social inequality. Remove all the secondary causes which have produced the great convulsions of the world, and you will almost always find the principle of inequality at the bottom” (Gissinger 1999, 33). Also, the rhetoric in the American Revolution was that all men are created equal; in the French Revolution, the peasants shouted liberty, equality, fraternity; the motto of the Russian Revolution was peace, land, bread; and a war slogan of the Chinese Communist Revolution was those who have much give much, those who have little give little (33). These point out that many armed conflicts have egalitarian ideas. Though not suggesting that a revolution of the types listed above is going to occur in any African country, the conflict in Nigeria, as will be noted later, also has some aspects of these phenomena in them.

Two models link inequality and political violence. These are economic discontent theory and political opportunity theory. In the strict version, discontent oriented theories maintain that inequality is the basis of all rebellion, and that if economic discontent is high, violent political conflicts will occur. Conversely, politically oriented theories maintain that economic discontent is not central, and that political resources and opportunities determine the extent of violent political. These theories will be the basis of analysis with respect to the Sierra Leone and DRC conflicts.

#### Motivation

My motivation for this thesis is based on the fact I’m an African who has seen and experienced the reality of African conflicts. I have traveled abroad quite extensively and listened to varying opinions on Third World and African issues especially with regards to conflicts and the poor state of their economies. Views differ on this subject depending on

one's prejudices. The main stream African perception is that governments of the advanced world are not doing enough to close the North-South economic gap generally, and Africa's in particular and that the new globalization or increased interconnectedness and liberalization of trade, rather than helping resuscitate, are hurting their economies.

Books I have read that advance the viewpoints of the advanced world and my personal interactions with some Westerners put the blame on the doorsteps of leaders of African countries citing them for mismanagement, corruption and abuse of power, which all go to undermine development of their countries. In writing this dissertation, I will take all these contending views into consideration and without bias ascertain whether, though there are internal contradictions that have been a source of latent conflicts in African countries, these conflicts have been exacerbated by globalization.

## CHAPTER 2

### LITERATURE REVIEW AND RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

#### Literature Review

There is a great wealth of literature on globalization and conflicts, with each writer arguing from a particular perspective depending on the economic school of thought to which they belong to, while others are very objective and see facts as they are. Most Third world scholars argue from the *structuralist* viewpoint whilst those from the advanced world would normally expound the *liberalist* theory. In order to present an unbiased thesis, both viewpoints are represented.

In his book *Understanding International Conflicts, an Introduction to Theory and History*, Joseph S Nye, JR. a lecturer at Harvard University, identifies various dimensions or forms of globalization noting that these have significant effects on the day to day lives of people around the world in different ways. He noted that climatic change, and other environmental fallouts from economic activities, as some of the negative effects of globalization. He was of the opinion that rising inequality was a major cause of the political reactions that halted an earlier wave of economic globalization early in the twentieth century. The recent period of globalization has also been associated with increasing inequality among and within some countries. The ratio of incomes of the twenty percent of people in the world living in the richest countries have increased from 30:1 in 1960 to 74:1 in 1997. By comparison, it increased between 1870 and 1913 from 7:1 to 11:1 (Nye 2003, 188). The result is a “lot of angry young people, to whom new information technologies have given the means to threaten the stability of the societies they live in and even to threaten the social stability in countries of the wealthy zone”

(188). As increasing flows of information make people more aware of inequality, it is not surprising that some choose to fight as this in the case of the Niger Delta situation portrays. Nye's book has been an excellent source of literature for this research, and it is his definition of globalization that I have adapted for my work. Though he did not address Africa specifically, he noted that an increasingly liberalized world is a source of friction and conflict, and that some countries particularly those in the Third World are loosing out in the short term.

Dr. David J. Francis, a lecturer at the Department of Peace Studies at University of Bradford, writing on *Conflict Diamonds and the Analysis of African conflicts*, surmised that the international focus on diamonds as the root cause of the civil wars in Sierra Leone and Angola is an inadequate understanding of the fundamental problems underlying African conflicts. His view is that the role of outside forces in these wars, the currency of which is diamond is like new wine in an old bottle, noting that this has led to "inappropriate international responses and ill-defined solutions in managing and resolving these civil wars"(Francis 2001, 3). While it is true that diamond is not the root cause of these conflicts, what is missing from Dr. David's analysis is whether the wars would have continued for the number of years without the mineral in question, especially if there had been no market for it. This is a typical Western view that has enhanced a balanced research and afforded me the opportunity to critically re-examine the hypothesis for the research and to develop counter arguments to prove it.

Professor Ali Mazrui, the director of the Institute of Global Cultural Studies at the State University of New York, in an article entitled *The Global Hostage Crisis: The South Between Underdevelopment and Counter-Terrorism*, asserted that developing

countries continue to be held hostage by wider international forces over which they have no control, and that the process of globalization has its winners and losers with African countries among the losers. The article offers interesting insights into the possibility of political extremists finding solace in the economic plight of Africans to achieve their goals through conflicts. The article has been a useful source of information for this thesis. Most of the statistics on Africa's economy came from this document.

An article written by Robert D Kaplan in the Atlantic Monthly headlined *The Coming Anarchy* has also been analyzed critically for this project. Kaplan portrays a very bleak future for West Africa. He said, "West Africa is becoming the symbol of worldwide demographic, environmental, and societal stress, in which criminal anarchy emerges as the real 'strategic' danger. Diseases, overpopulation, unprovoked crime, scarcity of resources, refugee migrations, the increasing erosion of nation-state and international borders, and the empowerment of private armies, security firms, and international drug cartels are now most tellingly demonstrated through a West African prism"(Kaplan 1994, 5). He mentioned the fact that most of West Africa's rain forest is being lost at an alarming rate due to timber logging by international firms. In his premonition for the future, Kaplan said "Africa will be as relevant to the future character of world politics as the Balkans were a hundred years ago, prior to the two Balkan wars and the First World War. Then the threat was the collapse of empires and the birth of nations based on tribe. Now the threat is more elemental: nature unchecked. The coming upheaval, in which foreign embassies are shut down, states collapse, and contact with the outside world takes place through dangerous, disease-ridden coastal trading posts, will loom large in the century we are entering"(10). Though most of Kaplan's assertions are

exaggerated and barely recognized or stressed the role of outside economic actors on Africa's "coming anarchy", his point on the future of the African nation-state has provided springboards from which I garnered ideas to help answer some of my secondary questions.

Writing on globalization in *Strategic Paradigms 2025: US Strategic Planning for a New Era*, Jacquelyn Davis and Michael Sweeney explained globalization to mean the increasing level of global interdependence and interaction in economic affairs (Davis and Sweeney 1999, 14). They noted that the phenomenon came to the fore at the end of the cold war in both government statements and journal articles. Arguing that globalization has a general effect on global and regional stability, the writers said the central tenet of globalization theory is that broader interstate engagements are a stabilizing factor in international relations. Peace and security will be the byproducts of the globalization process, which on the threshold of the new century, centers on the revolution that has taken place in communications technology. "Internet access, cellular telephones, and instantaneous media broadcasts of unfolding events have changed forever the way in which people interact and relate to each other around the world"(15). By weaving the world's economies closer together to form a single global market place, the prospects for conflicts will be diminished since all states, or more and more states are presumed to have a stake in enabling investments and global capital flows. This in turn will have a positive effect on the way in which societies organize themselves, implicitly implying the growth of more democratic structures. Of immediate interest however is the trade off between the economic benefits associated with a state buying in to the global economy and the loss of sovereignty or control, which such steps may entail. Davis and Sweeney

acknowledged also that for some countries there is a downside to globalization, arising in part from a new sense of vulnerability that ensues from the permeability of national borders. They also noted, “in the extreme cases globalization can open the door to conflict over resources, boundaries, trade, or even ethnic-religious fault-lines” (16). This exposition on globalization though not related to any of the country case studies that I have conducted, brought to the fore the fact that the phenomenon has short term disadvantages, and that African countries are losing sovereignty as the case studies of Nigeria, Sierra Leone and the Democratic Republic of Congo have shown in chapter three.

A United Nations Security Council study entitled *The Report Of The Panel Of Experts On The Illegal Exploitation Of Natural Resource And Other Forms Of Wealth In The Democratic Republic of Congo*, noted that the natural resources of the country were exploited and sold on international markets. The main mineral in question is called Coltan which is a combination of Columbium and Tantalum. The report listed nine international corporations that had imported Coltan from the DRC via Rwanda for use in Europe, Asia and the United States (UN Report 2001, 8). It also mentioned specific African countries that have been adversaries in the war as active participants in the looting of DRC’s wealth. The sale of Coltan lacks a certification process that would flag its place of origin, as is currently being internationally implemented for conflicts diamonds. The document has been a major source of reference for the case study on the DRC, as its facts are authentic and cannot be disputed.

Another United Nations Report Pursuant to UN Security Council Resolution 1306(2000) in relation to Sierra Leone is another source of reference for this research.



The report details how various countries and companies were complicit in fuelling the conflict by their activities. The panel found conclusive evidence of supply lines to the main rebel group, the Revolutionary United Front (RUF) through neighboring countries by air. Weapons were procured directly from producing factories, or from surplus stocks of the armed forces in different countries mainly from the former Soviet bloc. Russian made Mi-8 transport helicopters were used to convey the arms to landing strips in RUF held areas. There was an extensive detail of how weapons originated from Ukraine and eventually got into the hands of the rebels through a network of companies in Gibraltar, Britain and Burkina Faso (UN Report 2000, 24). The document has helped me with ideas for my analysis on the conflicts in Sierra Leone.

An article by Charles Lerche titled *The Conflicts of Globalization*, points to the economic deterioration in the third world and suggested that the “movements of reaction whether ethnic, fundamentalist or Marxist have in common a wish to cut all bridges with the ‘other’ since there is little chance that the excluded can ever become true partners in a system that is so extraordinarily inclusive of economies and exclusive of societies” (Lerche 1998, 5). He is of the opinion that the average person in the world increasingly feels they have suffered from economic globalization, and is increasingly doubtful about the wisdom and motivation behind many international trade deals, and it is therefore hardly surprising that the promotion of free trade has become a divisive political issue. He argues that the world is united but not integrated since on the one hand problems and topical concerns are expressed in global terms while on the other, approaches to their solution tend to be piecemeal, and generally inhibited by diverging conceptions of identity and interest. All of which suggest that a world society becoming more and more

inter-connected physically, but lacking a consensus on fundamental values and priorities may well be torn by conflicts probably more intractable than Clausewitzian type conflicts between nations (8). The significance of this article to my study is that Lerche acknowledges the fact that conflicts of globalization will not be between states but within states, a true reflection of African conflicts in an increasingly liberalized world. The article helped in shaping my thoughts on some of my secondary questions.

One conceptual theory that provides an insight into the Nigerian case study is the human needs theory as formulated by John Burton to the study of social conflict. Burton explains that in analyzing conflicts one must distinguish among interests, values and needs. In trying to resolve conflicts it should be understood that only interests are negotiable in the short term; while values can only change over the long run in an atmosphere of security and nondiscrimination, and needs cannot be negotiated away under any circumstances (Burton 1990, 36). The implications of this formulation are far reaching. For example it suggests that there are limits to the extent to which the human person, acting separately or within a wider ethnic or national community, can be marginalized or manipulated, and that there are human development needs that must be satisfied and catered for by institutions, if these institutions are to be stable, and if societies are to be significantly free of conflicts. Among other requirements to satisfy some of their needs, he said humans require some control over their environments. If these are not met, the institutions lose support and legitimacy, and confront increasing opposition. Authorities tend to react with oppression and coercion. This analysis fitted well into the discussion on Nigeria in chapter 3.

## Research Methodology

This research was done using secondary sources only. My principal sources of materials were the CARL library and the Internet. My experiences in peace support operations in Liberia and Sierra Leone where I personally saw the role of outside influence on the civil wars in these countries also helped me to make a critical analysis of the case study on Sierra Leone. To answer the primary question I reviewed contemporary African contemporary conflicts to ascertain the sources of these armed violence. I then proceeded to find out if there was anything new about these conflicts and what these were, and if an aspect or more of globalization had played a role in them. In doing so I sought the perspectives of writers from both the West who would normally argue in favor of globalization, and some African writers who also normally accuse 'big business' of causing some of the plights of Africa countries.

The case studies came from the examination of the literature I had reviewed and others that I had as the research progressed. The emphasis during the case studies was to critically examine the countries in question and ascertain what was different about the level and intensity of the violence associated with the conflict. I also wanted to determine what made those conflicts to be prolonged or suppressed and why or not efforts to resolve them were fruitful or futile within a time frame. In effect I wanted to find out why some conflicts were so easily resolved and others not, and if any factors contributed to this. If I was able to make a connection between globalization and armed violence in the case studies, then the hypothesis for the research would have been proven. My next determination then was to attempt to make a projection into the future to visualize how Africa will look like at the turn of this century and to prove or disprove Kaplan's

assertion of a coming anarchy for Africa. Making recommendations on how African countries can survive in the new era of globalization was then looked at.

## CHAPTER 3

### ANALYSIS OF THE PROBLEM

#### Introduction

Chapter three has been divided into two parts. Part one examines various opinions on contemporary African conflicts in a bid to ascertain their root causes from those perspectives. Part two is the detailed case studies of the civil wars in the DRC, Sierra Leone, Nigeria and Guinea. In all four scenarios, an attempt was made to ascertain what part the process of globalization contributed to the conflict. I did not measure the level of globalization for each country because statistics are not available to determine the value of investments in each of them.

#### Part One: Views on Causes of Contemporary African Conflicts

This part ascertains what the immediate and remote causes of African violent conflicts are. A critical analysis was made of what the perceptions of the causes of contemporary African conflicts are from both Westerners and Africans in order to foster a balanced overview.

#### The External Factor

A World Bank sponsored volume by M. Berdal and D. Malone titled *Greed and Grievance: Economic Agendas in Civil Wars* established that “new wars are not only different from the old wars in terms of their goals and their methods of warfare, but that greed seems more important than grievances.” (Berdal and Malone 2000, 110). This brings to the fore the aspect of economic interests as a factor in civil wars. In effect, economic motivations are regarded as a catalyst to some of the new wars as the interests of the key actors and groups who benefit from the wars, do all they can to prolong them

because they profit from the currency of the war, which are the natural resources of the country. An analysis of the report makes the point that there is always an interaction between grievance and greed in which grievances generate greed. In other words, while grievances are the cause of these new conflicts, the greed of the actors exacerbates the conflicts further.

While it is entirely true that there are numerous cases of unfairness in resource distribution in particular countries due to the greed the leadership which have resulted in grievances and rebellion (war), it is also equally true that ‘further greed’ can be curbed if there is no currency with which to finance a rebellion and more so if there is no means of selling the resources and buying arms legitimately. The demand for cell phones and computer chips, for example, is helping fuel the civil war in the DRC. The main currency of the war is a key component in everything from mobile phones made by Nokia and Ericsson, and computer chips from Intel, to Sony stereos and VCRs (Essick 2001, 1) A UN report stated that Rwandan, Ugandan and Burundian rebels had looted and smuggled thousands of tons of coltan into their countries and exported to the global market, using the profits to finance their armies. Details of the chain reactions precipitating the conflict has been given in the case study but the analogy here is that Laurent Kabila successfully ousted Mobutu Seseseko in 1997; Kabila himself was assassinated subsequently, but the war continues to rage with six foreign armies battling each other for the control of the resources of the country. There is really no motivation to stop the war because of the feeling that there is more to loose than gain if the war is ended sooner.

Mary Kaldor, a lecturer at the London School of Economics noted that the flames of civil conflicts in Africa are a manifestation of what she conceptualized as “new wars”

or the character of contemporary internal wars (Kaldor 1999, 16). Kaldor had been studying the new asymmetrical warfare in Africa and argues that the consequences of globalization have weakened the governance capacity of some states and in extreme cases have led to the collapse of the state apparatus and the privatization of security (18). In these circumstances, those states have been unable to serve as the primary provider of security, a phenomenon which has led to prolonged conflicts

### The African Perspective

Sunday Dare, an African writer, states “from the oilfields of the Niger Delta in Nigeria, to the diamond and copper fields of Sierra Leone, Angola and Liberia, to the rich mineral deposits of the Great Lakes region, to the mountain range plains and tourist havens of East African countries, the continent of Africa seems undoubtedly blessed. From these blessings however, much sorrow, want and deprivation has flowed.”(Dare 2002, 1). He puts the blame squarely on leadership, and the role of multinational corporations (MNCs).

As in other parts of the world, the end of colonization in Africa came with struggles for political control, social emancipation, and access to resources. These struggles have in turn degenerated into conflicts and internecine wars. Dare asserted that many African countries are “retarded in their development, with leaders unbridled in their lust for power, steeped in official corruption, chaotic in their political engineering, and are now sprinting towards total collapse”(2). He also blames Africa’s spiral of violence on generations of opportunistic and venal African leaders who have done little to develop their societies and emancipate their people from economic mess.

Dare also noted Africa's steady descent into near economic strangulation and political chaos against the backdrop of expansion and liberalization of world trade. He claims that many (MNCs) have "acted as economic predators in Africa, gobbling up national resources, distorting national economic policies, exploiting and changing labor relations, committing environmental despoliation and manipulating governments and the media." (4). In order to ensure uninterrupted access to resources, some MNCs have supported repressive African leaders, such as the late Sani Abacha of Nigeria, and warlords like Foday Sankoh of Sierra Leone. The economic interests of MNCs such as De Beers Diamond Conglomerate and Royal Dutch Shell have thus served as catalysts for conflicts and impeded prospects for development and peace.

Dare was of the opinion that while globalization optimists maintain that global capital has served as a dynamic engine of growth, and opened the windows for economic opportunities such as Ireland which has experienced phenomenal economic growth, in the case of Africa some the opposite is sometimes true. At least in the last decade, some of the conflicts can be traced to the expansion of commercial networks that link to the global market. This is especially true in states that have extractive resources with global appeal, value or markets. While the state's interest in generating revenue from these resources coincides with those of interested companies, the latter's interest in maximizing profits conflicts with the concerns of the citizens of the area. These include environmental and health concerns, which is at the core of the current conflict in the oil producing Niger Delta region of Nigeria.

Details of conflict diamonds in Sierra Leone, which have helped perpetuate several years of civil conflict and resulted in the loss of several thousands of lives is in



part two of this chapter, but what needs mentioning here is the direct role of a network of interlinked companies in elements of that conflict. To safeguard their economic interests, these corporations procured weapons and provided training in areas of conflict, using private security organizations (Kaldor 1999, 23). In the process, they became accomplices with rebels and governments officials, whichever was expedient, to buy diamonds the proceeds of which went to prosecute the war. Clearly, where minerals and oil abound, MNCs find the lure irresistible.

Because of problems of corrupt leadership, the fragile nature of African countries and the ease with which MNCs are able to peddle influence, Africa is caught between a rock and a hard place. Another aspect of war economies and illicit trade, such as the barter trade in timber and other agricultural products that are exchanged for arms also needs mention. For example, Charles Taylor of Liberia, as warlord between 1989 and 1997, supplied a third of France's tropical hard wood requirements through French companies (Duffield 2000, 84). Mark Duffield therefore argues that "a high level of complicity among international companies, offshore banking facilities, and Northern governments has assisted in the development of war economies" and that there is a "growing symbiotic relationship between zones of stability and instability within the global political economy" (86).

#### Views from the North

Some western analysts of African conflicts such as Dr. David Francis have argued that the role played by precious minerals in African conflicts is not new, and that the exploitation of war economies is as old as warfare itself. To him, the struggle for the control of strategic resources has been a common feature for most of the wars of

contemporary world politics as such, diamond or oil, as a currency of war is nothing new. His argues that the wars in the former Zaire and Angola in the 1960s and 1970s were about the domestic and international exploitation of strategic minerals, although, with an East-West ideological underpinning. He sees these issues now becoming prominent because of the security vacuum created by the absence of superpower rivalry. Warlords, rogue states, arms and drugs traffickers, and MNCs exploiting the economic opportunities of globalization have filled this vacuum and seen the emergence of a global informal economy that is inextricably linked with the globalization of legal trade (Francis 2001, 2).

Francis said, “the nexus between the globalized informal economy and legal trade is facilitated by contemporary economic and technological globalization, which has led to improved communications infrastructure and instantaneous commercial transactions” (8). He dismisses the international focus on diamonds or greed as the main reason for civil wars in Africa as a rather simplistic interpretation of the fundamental causes of these conflicts. He assert that these civil wars are not only about greed or strategic minerals such as diamonds, gold or oil, but essentially about fundamental political, economic and socio-cultural grievance. Strategic minerals, to him, are only one aspect of the dynamics of the new wars and such a focus fails to acknowledge the blurred boundaries of the greed and grievance nexus.

He questions why in the case of Sierra Leone, even though diamonds were discovered in the 1930s, the country did not degenerate into civil war until 1991. This, according to Francis, therefore begs the question of whether the sheer availability of minerals in these countries and the perceived exploitation of them by foreign companies

have caused these conflicts. It becomes evident, in his view, that motivations of economic gain are an inadequate explanatory variable of post cold war conflicts and that economic and political exclusion, and perceived injustice or fundamental grievances are the reasons for the majority of these new wars.

A common theme that runs through the perspectives discussed is that an increasingly liberalized, interconnected world at the end of the Cold War has changed conflict dynamics in Africa substantially. This is not to ignore other internal dynamics that have nourished contemporary conflicts. Identity and participation are some of these. There are several instances of political delineation and perceived unfairness and injustice in the sharing of resources, which have caused most of these conflicts. Some of these types or areas of conflict overlap and often reinforce each other. For instance, identity conflicts can coincide with limits on political participation and uneven distribution of scarce resources. To summarize this part, while there are no doubts that there are serious internal problems that have been the bane of Africa since independence, new causes of conflicts that seem to have compounded these fragilities have emerged since the 1990s.

## Part Two: Case Studies of Conflict Dynamics in Selected Countries

Globalization has often been equated to the Trojan horse of the ancient Greek city states, “beautiful” as it is, and with the hope and promise for a more prosperous and peaceful world, it can be a nightmare for countries that do not have the capacity to mitigate some of its impacts. Conflict scenarios in three African countries have been examined in this part to ascertain the extent to which outside actors played roles to sustain or prolong them. The scenarios of the Democratic Republic of Congo and Sierra

Leone portray situations in which internal contradictions rooted in lack of good leadership and political marginalization of certain segments of the society led to armed uprisings by rebel groups to oust the incumbents from power. These developments are quite 'normal' in Africa, but in these instances the intensity, duration and complexity have not followed the norms associated with these conflicts. The problem with the Niger Delta conflict is the consequence of environmental degradation caused by the activities by multinational oil companies that have fanned existing ethnic dissent. A case study on Guinea, with similar underlying causes as the first two and why the conflict was contained or suppressed within a relatively short time will also be examined.

#### The Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC)

The Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) holds the world's largest reserve of coltan. Four-fifths of the world's coltan is found in Africa, of which 80 percent is located in the DRC's eastern region (Montague 2002, 2). In the late 1990s demand for coltan skyrocketed following the boom in the technology industry. Between 1990 and 1999, sales of tantalum capacitors used in electronics industry for cellular phones, pagers, PCs, and automotive electronics increased by 300 percent (3).

The sale of coltan lacks a certification process that would flag its place of origin, as is currently being internationally implemented for conflicts diamonds. A pattern of illicit investment in the region was first established during the period when Laurent Kabila led the revolt against Mobutu Sese Sekou in 1996 (5). During this time international investors restructured deals established under the rule of the former president, effectively crowning Kabila as the de facto leader while he was still a rebel leader in control of only a small portion of the country. This was in violation of the

Zairian constitution which vests authority for the prospecting, exploration and exploitation of minerals in the Ministry of Mines and Energy (5). During the combined Rwandan and Ugandan occupation that followed in 1998, investors have continued this pattern of regarding rebel held territory as de facto sovereign states open for investments.

The ongoing war in the DRC, which the former United States Secretary of State Madeleine Albright described as 'Africa's first world war' (seven African countries are currently engaged in the conflict), has been fuelled mostly by weapons from the former Soviet bloc countries (Deen 2001, 1). The weapons, which include fighter aircraft, combat helicopters, tanks and heavy artillery, were imported from Russia, Belarus, Kazakhstan and Ukraine, among others (1). The export of arms to countries and groups involved in conflicts is not new but during the Cold War era, it was easier for states to regulate these sales. In effect, there were stricter export regimes to prevent unauthorized sales. Presently, middlemen can without difficulty export weapons and get paid through off shore banking systems or other forms of payment without official government authorization. Victor Bout, a former officer of the Soviet air force, now a businessman has been named as the main conduit of weapons supplies to the DRC conflict, and carting looted minerals for sale worldwide. He runs a maze of individuals and companies which employ some 300 people, owned and operated up to 60 aircraft, including the largest private fleet of Antonov cargo planes in the world (Essick 2001, 3).

Foreign armies and criminal cartels are also finding the phenomenal mineral wealth in the DRC too hard to resist and there is no shortage of companies willing to turn a blind eye to the source of these minerals and the methods used to extract them. In fact, the scale of the exploitation is as complex and vast as the country itself. According to a

UN report, the exploitation is “systematic and systemic” (UN Report 2000, 46). The report adds, “key individual actors including top army commanders and businessmen on the one hand, and government structures on the other, have been the engines of this systematic and systemic exploitation” (48). The private sector is said to play a vital role in the continuation of the war, as several companies trade arms for natural resources including forest and wildlife. The report lists nine international corporations that had imported coltan from the DRC via Rwanda for use in Europe, Asia and the United States (8). It is even thought that even if foreign armies withdraw from the DRC, the conflict is likely to continue because military commanders of armies engaged in the conflict have created or protected several networks to plunder the country’s wealth. At the heart of the financial setting is a bank called BCDI, located in Kigali, Rwanda, which is a corresponding bank of Citibank in New York. Sabena Cargo and SDV of the Bollore Group have been the key transportation networks in this chain of exploitation and continuation of the war (50), said the report. The report said the increase in revenues of the Rwandan army from coltan sales was made easy by, “the passive role of some private companies such as Sabena and SDV for the transport of coltan, Citibank for the financial transaction as the corresponding bank of BCDI, the self-proclaimed U.S. honorary consul in Bukavu, in the DRC (one Ramnik Kotecha) and some staff in various embassies in Kigali” (51).

The World Bank also comes in for heavy criticism by the UN report. The bank praised Uganda for its good economic performance in 2000 and a model for a new debt relief scheme, while there were indications that this performance was driven in part by the exploitation of resources of the DRC. It observed that notes exchanged between

World Bank staff clearly showed that the bank was informed about a significant increase in gold and diamond exports from a country that produces very little of these minerals, or exported quantities of gold that it could not produce. Uganda reported 2.5 tons of coltan exports a year before the war broke out in 1997 but in 1999, the volume increased to seventy tons. Prior to making its recommendations, the report listed thirty four companies that were importing minerals from the DRC via Rwanda, and are largely based in Belgium, Netherlands, the United Kingdom, Canada, Russia and India.

Coltan mining labor is very well paid in Congo terms. The average Congolese worker makes \$10 a month, while a coltan miner can make up to \$50 a week (Montague 2002, 7). This underlies the vicious circle of the war. Coltan has permitted the Rwandan army to sustain its presence in the DRC. The army has provided protection and security to individuals and companies extracting the minerals and made money that is shared with the army, which in turn continues to provide the enabling environment to continue the exploitation. According to experts and dealers, Rwanda must have made at least \$250 million over a period 18 months (Essick 2001, 4). Other minerals being mined include tin, copper and diamonds. Zimbabwe, Angola, and Namibia are the other countries that have troops in the DRC. One wonders how these countries have maintained their forces over the years in view of the precarious economic conditions at home.

The link between the bloodshed and coltan is said to be causing concern among high-tech manufactures. Slowly they are beginning to grapple with the possibility that their products may contain the tainted fruits of civil war. Tougher import and export regulations have been imposed on diamond exports, but with tantalum, such regulations may be difficult to enforce. The market is based on secretive and convoluted trade links

subject to few international regulations, and the ore is not sold on regulated metal exchanges.

The weakening of some African states that led to the privatization of state authority, as the discussion of Sierra Leone later portrays, suggests that private military companies were a logical development of the outsourcing of sovereign duties. While traditional private security companies have seen increased corporate protection due to the inability of the state to provide security, these companies appear to have been replaced by a previously unrecognized form of privatization, which is the quasi-privatization of the armed forces of neighboring countries as the case of the DRC portrays. Advantageous access to minerals in a weak state has been gained through militarizing commercial activities. This is the scenario: The corporate entity provides the capital to exploit or develop the raw material, mostly minerals. The contract army, linked through shareholding or personal relationship to the corporate entity, simultaneously provides security to the sovereign and the mining site as well. The sovereign provides legitimacy for these foreign actors, and through their presence, secures patronage payments from mineral resources while using them to physically strengthen his position. Laurent and Joseph Kabila, the former and present de facto Presidents of the DRC, have all employed this strategy. This triangular system of profit sharing has transformed the international problem of securing a destabilized mineral-rich state into a viable business activity to the benefit of all parties.

#### Sierra Leone – A Case of Conflict Diamonds

The civil war in Sierra Leone was a conflict that had many of the region's powers vying for influence and power over a lucrative piece of real estate. The support given by



warlord Charles Taylor to the Revolutionary United Front (RUF) to launch its incursion into Sierra Leone enabled Taylor to export between 150,000 to 200,000 carats of diamond to Belgium annually between 1994 and 1998 (Berman 2001, 4). Sierra Leone, with one of the richest diamond fields in Africa exported only 8500 carats in 1998 (4). Clearly, large portions of Sierra Leonian diamonds were exported through Liberia, to the financial benefit of Taylor and his cronies. Major diamond companies such as DeBeers, a company with subsidiaries in London, South Africa and Israel, and Rex Diamonds headquartered in Antwerp, Belgium had mining interests in the country to varying degrees (5). Some of these companies, throughout the war, hired mercenaries to guard mines from rebel attack to enable them continue their commercial activities.

Mineral fields that were captured by rebels were mined and the proceeds sold on the informal market, which ended up in department stores across the world. This enabled them to buy weapons to continue the war. This shows how conflicts are fuelled by outside interests that profit from these resources, as explained by UN Secretary General Kofi Annan. “In the competition for oil and other precious resources in Africa, interests external to Africa continue to play a large and sometimes decisive role, both in suppressing conflict and sustaining it. The ongoing conflict in Angola has also demonstrated further, how access to resources by warring parties can foster violence, and has highlighted the impact that international business interests can have on the success or failure of peace efforts” (Berman 2001, 6)

Regulating the supply of arms and related issues have been ignored not just in the former Soviet states, but also in countries like the United Kingdom (UK), a former colonial master of Sierra Leone. There are no enforceable laws in the UK that regulate

the supply of mercenaries and military training which are done through brokers and consultants such as Sandline International, a British company. Sandline has been closely linked to the mercenary organization, Executive Outcomes (EO), a South African private military company, and Branch Energy, a diamond conglomerate, which exploit mineral reserves in countries where Sandline and EO operate (Lewis 2002, 9). The UK export control system is also seriously flawed when it comes to arms brokering. Private companies in the UK can arrange arms deals where both the supplier and purchaser remain outside the UK. No UK controls apply if the equipment remains outside the UK, even if a UK company benefits financially. There are reported to be over 300 brokers, consultants and arms dealers active in London alone (11). Such brokers have arranged arms sales, which contributed to the Rwandan genocide in 1994. The UK government has no mechanism to police such transfers to ensure that ethical foreign policy criteria are met, when the arms never touch UK soil.

Many are of the view that Sierra Leone's war is a crisis of modernity, caused by the failed patrimonial systems of successive postcolonial governments. While there is no doubt about widespread public disenchantment with the failing state, with corruption and lack of opportunity, similar problems elsewhere have not led to years of brutality by forces that have no ideology, political support and ethnic identity such as the RUF. Only the economic opportunity presented by the breakdown in law and order could sustain violence at the levels that have plagued Sierra Leone since 1991. The point of the war may not actually have been to win it, but to engage in profitable crime under the cover of warfare.

Over the years the informal diamond mining sector, long dominated by what might be called disorganized crime, became increasingly influenced by organized crime and by transcontinental smuggling not just of diamonds but of guns, drugs, and by vast sums of money in search of a laundry. As the mutation of the war continued, so did the number and types of predators, each seeking to gain from one side of the conflict or another. Innocent civilians were caught in the crossfire during such gruesome wars for control and exploitation of diamonds, timber and raw materials.

It was not until 1998, when the United Nations first began investigating conflict diamonds in Angola, that the case of Sierra Leone also got the attention of the diamond industry and the worldwide public. Canada's ambassador to the United Nations, Robert Fowler oversaw an in-depth conflict diamond report, which named some of the individual culprits and highlighted the lack of oversights at key diamond centers worldwide, such as Antwerp, the world's diamond trading capital, and Tel Aviv. The United Nations ultimately created a monitoring mechanism to investigate conflict diamond peddling in Sierra Leone, and the Security Council placed a diamond export ban on Liberia and the rebel held areas of Sierra Leone in 2000.

I will now return to the issue of private security companies. Although the acronym is now nearly universal, private military companies (PMCs), in the sense of mercenaries, were unheard of in the English language prior to late 1995 (13). The new label has done much to improve the image of private soldiers, if little to affect the realities of their activities. The term has commonly been used to refer to Executive Outcomes and Sandline International, two names used by a single group of British and South Africa businessmen and ex-military officers. In February 1999, in the wake of the

outbreak of a scandal involving the Sierra Leone crisis, a British parliamentary report brought to light how British Foreign Office officials and diplomats had withheld information from the government about Sandline's export of arms to Sierra Leone in violation of United Nations sanctions (14). The scandal erupted in the spring of 1998, when British newspapers published photographs showing engineers from a Royal Navy frigate docked in Freetown, capital of Sierra Leone, helping to service Sandline's Russian-made helicopter. Until the news broke out, Sandline had been attempting to restore the government of the ousted Sierra Leonean President and in so doing win access to diamond and mineral concessions for the company's businessmen backers.

After almost a decade of controversial intervention in Africa, these PMCs are seeking legal recognition and standing. In 2002, Tim Spicer, the Chief Executive Officer of Sandline pronounced his creed at a news conference, that the world was waiting for "the speed and flexibility with which they (PMCs) can deploy, rather than wait for the UN to form a force" (15). He even suggested that it might be in the international community's interest if PMCs were hired to intervene in longstanding conflicts such as in Sudan or topple leaders like Robert Mugabe of Zimbabwe. In short, he proposed the overt shifting of significant foreign policy objectives to mercenary companies, an idea that would have been met with derision only a few years before, yet he received a respectful hearing at the conference. He told his audience that Sandline and its like "are part of a wholly new military phenomenon" (16), modern professionals who even handed out promotional literature and operate websites on the Internet. According to Spicer, private military companies are corporate bodies specializing in the provision of military skills to legitimate governments. Prospective clients are also told in brochures and presentations

that the company's policy is to work with internationally recognized governments or legitimate international bodies such as the United Nations. This is now a new operating principle for the new age mercenaries

A documentary was aired by a British television network, which launched a devastating attack on Spicer's operations, providing a different take on the wholly new military phenomenon. The documentary described the new kind of mercenary as an advanced army with commercial interests wanting to exploit the world's mineral resources. The program reported that several of their engagements have been noted for the indiscriminate nature of their attacks, in which many civilians have been wounded and killed, concluding that after the mercenaries went home the countries they had helped remained unstable and often bitterly divided and poorer.

In February 2002, the British Foreign Office published a long delayed response to parliamentary criticisms of Spicer and the mercenary trade. The conclusion of the British government's green paper, titled *Proposals for the Legislation of Private Military Companies: Options for Regulation*, was almost all that Spicer had wanted. The government opined that private military companies should be legalized and licensed. Britain's foreign secretary, Jack Straw, whose immediate predecessor, Robin Cook, had been humiliated by Spicer's conduct, was now toeing the private military company line. He announced that states and international organizations are turning to the private sector as a cost effective way of procuring services that would once have been the exclusive preserve of the military. Straw emphasized, "The demand for private military services is likely to increase, , , the cost of employing private military companies for certain functions in United Nations operations could be much lower than that of national armed

forces”, but added “clearly there are many pitfalls” (17). The question is what is wrong with a private security company helping to reinstall a government? The contradiction is that mercenary activities are illegal under international law, and they normally operate overtly. They are not even given prisoner of war status under the Geneva Convention. The fact that a country such as the United Kingdom can contemplate legalizing mercenary activities shows the degree to which international politics in the contemporary world has been affected by new dynamics. With numerous latent conflicts in sub-Saharan African countries, the legalization of mercenaries will enable disaffected groups able to afford to hire them. The effect of this on the propensity to inflame these latent conflicts cannot be discounted. What a cauldron of instability Africa will then be.

#### Nigeria: A Case of Environmental Conflict

Nigeria currently produces approximately two million barrels per day and is the fifth largest producer in the Organization of Oil Producing and Exporting Countries (OPEC). By the country’s constitution, all minerals, oil and gas belong to the federal government, which negotiates the terms of production with international companies. These companies operate joint ventures in which the National Petroleum Corporation (NPC) owns about 55 percent (Human Rights Watch Report 1999, 12).

The Niger Delta, where the bulk of Nigeria’s oil is produced, is one of the world’s largest wetlands, and the largest in Africa. About 200,000 square kilometers, of which 6,000 square kilometers are mangrove forest, it has a high biodiversity typical of extensive swamp and forest areas, with many unique species of plants and animals. Occasional large oil spills pollute fresh drinking water supply, kill agricultural crops and fish, with serious effects on the communities and families affected. According to the

official estimates of the NPC, approximately 2,300 cubic meters of oil are spilled in 300 separate incidents annually (16), though the number is reported to be ten times as high due to under reporting. The Human Right Watch Report stated that statistics from the US Department of Petroleum Resources indicate that between 1976 and 1996, a total of 4,835 incidents resulted in the spillage of over 2.5 million barrels, out of which an estimated 77 percent was lost to the environment (17). Many communities also believe that local gas flares cause acid rain that corrodes the metal sheets used for roofing, though the oil companies have disputed this. There is also pressure for cultivable and habitable land.

Compensation for damages is inadequate, and in the absence of a properly functioning court system, there is no effective recourse to an independent arbiter to determine the value of the damaged property. Anger at the perceived injustices attributed to the oil economy has led increasing numbers from the communities in the oil regions to protest the exploitation of what they see as “their” oil, though the constitution provides that the federal government owns all oil. In January 2003, armed youth demanding compensation from Royal Dutch Shell seized an oilrig at Escravo, a town in the Niger delta and had to be dislodged by the Navy (Nigerian Vanguard Newspaper 2003, 5). In a similar development, protesters who go by the name Oil Land Owning Families Association of the Otor-Owhe clan chased shell workers from the flow station and put it under lock and key. They barricaded all access roads to the facility. This was after they had on December 12, 2002 issued the company a two-week ultimatum to move its facilities from their land for refusing to honor the terms of a new lease agreement. The

facility produces 28,000 barrels of crude oil a day and had to be shut down for weeks.

Examples of these are routine and numerous and have led to several deaths.

The case of the Niger Delta is a situation in which the citizens are perpetually at war with government security forces and oil companies because, rather than being a source of wellbeing and prosperity to the local communities, oil exploration has rather led to serious environmental damage and neglected developmental needs. This has resulted in clashes to the extent that eight local activists including their leader, Ken Sarowiwa, were hanged by the Sani Abacha regime in 1996. The need to address these concerns has led to perennial bloody conflicts, to even necessitate calls for secession of the oil producing states from the Nigerian federation. Several militant groups have emerged that harbor deep resentment against oil companies. Officials of Royal Dutch Shell, which dominates Nigeria's oil industry, confirmed in an enquiry after the death of military dictator, President Abacha, to buying arms for the Nigerian police, who have in turn used such weapons to brutalize citizens demonstrating against the company's policies. (Human Rights Watch Report 1999, 8).

In 1998, Chevron used its own helicopters to carry Nigerian soldiers who stormed an oil producing community called Parambe, and killed several protesters. Some may see nothing wrong with this if the authorities could not provide the needed security to enable the oil companies function. While it makes economic sense to provide the needed security for businesses to perform in a congenial environment, the purchase of arms by a private company for a government to protect its concerns denotes the degree to which state sovereignty has eroded in Nigeria and the increased role of non-state actors such as Royal Shell in an increasingly globalized world. The security of citizens and property of



a state is the prime responsibility of governments; the concern here is whether sovereignty in sub-Saharan African states are degenerating to the extent that it is being privatized to corporations, who now have to purchase arms for the state police to protect property. Some question why the money not being used to help resolve the underlying causes of the conflict - environmental degradation? Thus, due to insensitive and perhaps corrupt leadership, when the state is torn between maximizing the use of a vital source of revenue, and compromising on the welfare of its citizens, the authorities chose the former.

The environment as a national security issue as foreign capital looks for markets and business for the benefit of both the locals and companies, has been a source of concern in Nigeria and many African countries. The political impact of surging populations, depletion of resources, deforestation and their effects on inciting group conflicts is a serious issue that continues to breed conflicts in Africa. This has a source of concern about future African conflicts, which many believe will be environmentally driven. In the words of Robert Kaplan, “an increasing number of people will be stuck in history, living in shantytowns where attempts to rise above poverty, cultural dysfunction, and ethnic strife will be doomed by a lack of water to drink, soil to till, and space to survive in”(Kaplan 1994, 26).

In the Niger Delta as in other parts of Africa where chemical substances are introduced into water bodies as a result of commercial activities, environmental stress and conflicts will present people with a choice that may look like totalitarian mini-states as in Serbia-held Bosnia and road warrior cultures in Somalia. As the degradation proceeds, the size of the potential social disruption will also increase. As can be deduced

from the above analysis, the challenge for Africa is how to influence the process of liberalization in such a way that human suffering and poverty are eliminated. Trade and investment are the driving engines of liberalization, and at the absolute minimum, its impact should not violate human rights but rather promote and respect them. Trade and human rights regimes need not be in conflict, so long as the trade regime is applied and evolved in a manner that respects the hierarchy of norms in international law.

The oil companies are not to be blamed entirely for the conflict; the central government also bears some of the responsibility. What has intensified the violence is the perceived lack of fairness in payment of compensation, and the lack of proper mechanisms at regulating the activities of the oil companies to adhere to internationally accepted environmental standards. In sum, the linkage of environmental issues with oil production by multinational companies, has led to intractable conflicts in the Niger Delta region that has caused the death of several inhabitants of the localities and the significant erosion of state sovereignty in Nigeria.

#### Guinea - A Suppressed Civil War

The case of Guinea, another West African country, showed a country that has little or no natural resources hence the absence of “big businesses” and therefore low level of globalization. Guinea had a brief spell of civil war in 1999 that had similar underpinnings like other West African conflicts, the overthrow of dictatorial or unpopular governments. The President, General Lansane Conte was a former military leader who had transformed himself into a civilian President after organizing allegedly sham elections, replicating other African military rulers. After eighteen years in power, the son of former President Sekou Toure, whom Conte had overthrown, started a rebellion in

1999. The rebellion was started from the Sierra Leone border but was suppressed within four months by the government.

Unlike Liberia and Sierra Leone, Guinea has no minerals of value to serve as the currency of war to prosecute the war for a long time. The Guinea Armed Forces is not noted for extraordinary feats so as to defeat a rebellion on the scale initiated by the rebels. Here is a case of a rebel army unable to solicit external support because it could not finance the weaponry and other materiel required for a sustained rebellion. Had Guinea been endowed with resources, the odds would obviously have been against the government forces and the situation would have been different today.

In effect, the absence of extractable resources such as diamonds and coltan, which would have attracted the injection of foreign capital, avoided a repetition of the scenarios in the DRC and Sierra Leone where conflicts were sustained for long periods and resulted in the death and injury of several thousands of innocent men, women and children. The level, intensity and human suffering associated with the Guinean conflict was significantly low.

#### Effects of Conflicts on the Future of African Nation-States

Africa is vulnerable to several challenges, which include weak governance capacities, porous borders, poorly equipped armies, and weak economies. With its high propensity for conflicts and without the capacity to prevent much less resolve them, one wonders what the fate of sub Saharan African nation-states will be in the future as more discoveries of oil and other minerals such as uranium are made and become more economically globalized.

The state has been the most prominent feature in the international political system for so long that it is easy to take the permanence of its role in the organization of society for granted. But there is now a growing fear that the power of the sovereign African state is eroding. Within its historical borders some African states such as Sierra Leone and the Democratic Republic of Congo have ceased to be the locus of political action and identity, of social cohesion and general interest of the citizenry (Metz 2000, 3).

Economic liberalization is making the African nation-state obsolete, politics irrelevant and national sovereignty an empty shell (Clapham 2001, 7). Reduced to a managerial role in which it strives to cope with economic constraints that are beyond its control, some African states watch helplessly as the balance of forces swing towards the global markets. In the last decade, the emergence of major transnational economic and financial actors able to shift their operations almost at will and answerable to no one nation's political capital has signified the removal of several instruments of economic sovereignty from the control of the state.

Whereas the large majority of African states, however feeble their formal national militaries, did exercise unchallenged control over the whole of their designated territories, this has long ceased to be case especially after the 1990s. Military power has shifted very significantly away from formally constituted armies under the control of state governments in the capital cities, towards rural-based groups that exercise direct control over local economic resources, and gain their weapons either from friendly states across the border, or through the informal weapons networks that have proliferated since the end of the Cold War.

As refugee flows associated with these conflicts increase, and as peasants continue to migrate to cities around Africa and turning them into sprawling villages, national borders are now becoming meaningless, even as more power are falling into the hands of less educated, less sophisticated groups. For example, during the Sierra Leonean war child soldiers have dictated the fate of large communities.

Africa is beginning to see the privatization of sovereignty itself as local actors continue to challenge the authority of the state, and even significant elements of the population seeking to evade or ignore the state's claim to authority. Though there are a few who see no other structure emerging to replace the state system as the skeleton of international order, there can be little doubt that most sub Saharan African nation-states in the middle of this century will bear only a superficial resemblance to that of the mid twentieth century. The legal monopoly of armed force long claimed by the state is being wrestled out of its hands. As state power continually fades, and with it its ability to help weaker groups within society, most people in sub-Saharan Africa will be thrown back upon their own strengths and weaknesses. To the average person, political values will mean less, personal security more. As war and crime become indistinguishable, national defense may in the future be viewed as a local concept.

Future African wars will be those of communal survival, aggravated or, in many cases caused by environmental scarcity. These wars will be sub national, meaning that it will be hard for states and local governments to protect their own citizens physically. The aftermath of civil wars as occurred in Sierra Leone has led to a lot of crimes in the cities. As these crimes continue to grow, and the ability of governments and the criminal justice

systems to protect the citizens diminishes, urban crime will develop into a type of low intensity conflict that will coalesce along ethnic and political lines.

James Rosenau wrote, “The world is now so interdependent that ‘crisis networks’ evolve, as information about a crisis in one collectivity flows to others, and as its consequences ramify. By virtue of the information flows and of the interaction engendered by refugees, traders, terrorists, and other boundary spanning individuals and groups, authority crises overlap and cascade across collectivities, forming linkages among them on an issue basis” (Rosenau 1990, 10). This analysis brings an insight into the nature and scope of political conflict in a world of globalized international politics. As a result of increased access to information, and a general impression of the diminished competence or declining effectiveness of public institutions, citizens have lost their habit of obeying. If leaders are not able to find more effective means to gather support, citizens begin directing their loyalties and legitimacy sentiments elsewhere. We live in a world in which people are more aware, and to some extent more empowered by their access to information and their increased ability to analyze events shaping their lives. Populations become less compliant and more demanding at the time when national political institutions are seen as non-performing.

Non-state actors, especially in the private sector, will increasingly take decisions in several areas of the political and economic life of Africans. It is in these areas and these actors that some of the most significant cultural and political challenges to Africa will be found. This will be especially true where its impact exacerbates differences among and within states in terms of information, wealth, and social structure. For

example, the more law and order is enforced to control frustration as in the Niger Delta, the more the frustration.

There is now a widespread concern regarding the legitimacy of even the most seemingly legitimized authorities. The members of protest movements of many kinds in many different societies are demonstrating that there are features of societies unacceptable to a significant number of people who comprise them. These lead to various forms of deviant behavior, because deprivation frequently leads to overreaction, and the individual goes beyond the normal pursuit of needs satisfaction.

To conclude this chapter, the case studies have shown that indeed most African countries have deep rooted problems related to leadership and fair governance. In the cases studied, where these conflicts have erupted into violent conflicts, the more economically globalized the country the higher the level and intensity of these conflicts. For Sierra Leone and the DRC, the mining of precious minerals by both Africans and foreigners alike has exacerbated the conflicts. Environmental degradation, a secondary effect of extraction associated with oil production in Nigeria by MNCs is a cause of the never-ending turmoil in the Niger Delta region. The study reveals that in the case of Guinea where there are no minerals to attract foreign investment and capital, a war with similar undertones was contained within a short time because of lack of a medium to purchase war materiel. As a result of this trend of conflicts, it is feared that as more natural resources are discovered economic globalization will make Africa's cycle of violence never ending, and gradually erode the national sovereignty of the African nation state and render them obsolete.

## CHAPTER 4

### CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### Conclusions

As Africa's integration into the global markets continues, though at a very slow pace, its people are engaged in an often-bitter struggle. Conflict scenarios in three African countries were examined in this study to ascertain the extent to which outside actors played roles to prolong or exacerbate them. A case study on one other country with similar underlying causes and why it was contained within a relatively short time was also analyzed.

The study showed that the origins of African conflicts are manifold and complex, rooted in national and international arenas, and encompassing economic, and political, cultural and social parameters. On the socio political and cultural side, conflicts in Africa are directly related to the circumstances surrounding the acquisition of independence and to the multiethnic composition of independent states. Partially arising from these factors, emerge the more often cited causes generally subsumed under the generic label governance. This includes exclusion or perceived exclusion from the political process for reasons of personal, ethnic or value differences, lack of political unity, lack of genuine access to national institutions of governance and perception of inequality and discrimination.

Among the international factors, particularly noteworthy are the consequences derived from the end of the cold war and its aftermath, as well as the globalization and liberalization of the world economy, which have generated a sense of political and economic insecurity in Africa. At the end of the Cold War the liberal world envisioned a



global community made better by economic development and commercial enterprise accelerated by free trade, in which political considerations play a shrinking role in international economic relations. This vision was a logical extension of the core wisdom embodied in governmental reforms such as downsizing, business deregulation and privatization. However, the effects of economic development in other parts of the world are being felt across the three African countries and probably more yet to come in the form of armed violence.

A typical new phenomenon of modern era African wars is an array of global economic actors and networks including paramilitary groups organized around warlords, private military companies and units of regular forces. These have occurred in states that have been formally recognized by the outside world, with some of the trappings of statehood, but where those trappings do not express control over territory.

Another characteristic is the type of economy these conflicts generate. They have become a central source of the globalized informal market, the transnational criminal and semi legal economy that represents the underside of globalization. For example, the proliferation and sale of all types of weapons on the global markets especially from the former Soviet bloc has posed new challenges to the post cold war international system. The legitimate security forces of states generally use conventional weapons, and while the control of their legitimate use may be a laudable aim, the major problem relates to the illicit proliferation that takes place external to the state system. The resolution of the Warsaw Pact, the weakening and collapse of state structures, and the resulting lack of control systems in some of these states have created the forces of supply.

A similar tendency is evident in Africa, as a result of inadequate state building and the failure by many states to build proper security systems and democratic political systems after independence. These have created a vacuum that has been filled by new, non-state actors, fomenting and participating in intrastate conflicts and creating a demand weapons. These wars have become very difficult to contain and difficult to end. They spread through refugees and displaced persons, at times spilling over to neighboring states. These wars represent a defeat for democratic politics and each bout of warfare strengthens these networks with a vested political and economic interest in continued violence. There are no clear victories or defeats because the warring parties are sustained both politically and economically by the violence. The wars have sped up the process of state unraveling; destroying what is left of productive activities, undermine legitimacy and generated cultures of violence, as the studies on the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Sierra Leone have portrayed.

Globalization has both positive and negative effects. In the area of economics, rapid advance of technology, sharp decrease in transportation and communication costs have led to greater internationalization of trade, finance and investments. In this sense globalization has contributed to higher productivity, to a rise in living standards and to new development opportunities in some African countries. In the long term, these factors are likely to be beneficial in bringing about more sustainable political and economic development in Africa. However in the short term, the political aspects of globalization have led to a shifts of power from sovereign states to technologically advanced global elites and private multinational, oftentimes, non national interests.

The effects of globalization on the African state have been of both economic and military nature. It has led to the internationalization of conflicts and wars which otherwise would have remained local. It has undermined the power of the state, and on the democratization process that began to fledge in Africa in the aftermath of the cold war. Nigeria has been unable to effectively regulate and protect the environment, resulting in the Niger Delta conflict that is threatening to disintegrate the country.

Most of sub Saharan Africa is undergoing a social change; changes which have historically been associated with increasing levels of conflict. In his work *Fluctuations of Social Responsibility, War and Responsibility* P.A. Sorokin noted that the magnitude of what he called “social strife” was at its highest during periods when a given society was undergoing a great change of world view, for instance from a religious outlook to a more secular and materialistic perspective (Sorokin 1937, 13). Such periods of change were characterized by conflicts of values and interests that became widespread and violent.

The spread and acceleration of globalization is generating change on an unprecedented scale. This study shows that globalization is inherently disruptive in some countries, and that an increasing incidence of conflict is an inevitable byproduct of it. The ever-widening interdependence of publics, economics, societies and politics generated by the liberalization of trade and the micro electronic revolution that has collapsed time and space has also rendered instabilities in several parts of Africa.

The overall conclusion is that globalization is undermining the two cornerstones of thinking about war and peace; that war and peace are essentially a matter of relations between states. States are no more the most significant actors in the arena of actors. Transnational actors working across state boundaries have become major players that

determine war and peace. In the case of Sierra Leone and the Democratic Republic of Congo, these transnational actors have exacerbated conflicts that were started by local actors, with the commercial activities that became associated with the conflicts. The extraction of oil in Nigeria, a venture which should have otherwise profited the locals of the area, has rather led to running battles with the companies and government forces, to the extent that state authority and sovereignty has been greatly undermined.

From this dissertation a correlation between globalization and wars in the four African countries has been drawn. The hypothesis for this thesis, that globalization has exacerbated Africa's conflicts is, at least not disproven. The level and intensity of these conflicts appear to have increased as a result of globalization.

#### Recommendations

What is true of Africa at the beginning of this century need not be true at the end. Africa's security challenges are serious, perhaps even dire, but not insurmountable. They can be controlled with careful planning and wise leadership. One of the key determinants of Africa's future will be the way in which its leaders approach the continent's problems. An important feature of any solution must be the establishment of a consensus in African societies about the kind of security that is needed. In the broad sense, security should be taken to mean not just the preservation of small ruling elites, but the protection and preservation of all that the society considers to be important and valuable. This should include the protection of individuals and groups from physical harm, and the preservation of the economic and environmental heritage to be passed unto future generations. The avoidance of arbitrary and coercive political rule is another security interest that must be pursued. The development of a well-conceived national, sub regional and regional

security strategies that provide coherent paths towards identifying, advancing and protecting societal interests must also be given priority.

Despite the divergence of views about globalization and its conflicts, there can be no denying the fact that the pace of social change is quickening, that this change puts great stress on individuals, social institutions like the family, and governments and that something must be done to help individuals and societies adjust to change. There is the need for the realization that the world shares one fragile planet whose survival requires mutual respect and careful treatment of its entire people and its environment.

Efforts should be made by sub Saharan African countries to mitigate the negative fallouts from the process of globalization. The role of the state must be changing with the fast emerging new world realities. The safety and security of citizens remains a paramount responsibility of the state. The strategic response by African countries to the globalization process should be identifying, analyzing and diagnosing their strengths and weaknesses in the light of the opportunities and challenges posed by globalization. They should rely on their own internal force, i.e. the capacity of their people. African countries themselves and those who want to assist them must recognize this fact and commit resources and energies to harnessing the capacity of all African people and especially the poor for their development. In particular they must strengthen public administrative systems. Most of the problems of underdevelopment can be traced to the poor performance of government officials who come to office not to serve, but to help themselves to the often-scarce resources of the country. Public institutions must be seen to be working in the interest of the citizens and not compromise on standards that are required of businesses whose activities directly or indirectly affect them. If public officials in

Nigeria ensure that environmental standards of oil production are stringently enforced as is being done in for example, the Middle East, the conflict in the Niger Delta would have been resolved. In effect, adherence to openness and accountability will help reduce some of the latent conflicts that are fuelled by external commercial interests.

Democratic institutions must be strengthened if Africa is to make any headway economically. Africans must fashion out their own form of democracy that suits their circumstances and peculiarities, but which will have most, if not all, the characteristics of western style democracy. These should include the rule of law, individual freedoms, elections, etc. This will imbibe a sense of belonging in individuals and foster better social relationships between the tribes and communities that make the countries so divergent. This is the only way African states as we have them now will not 'die' or be reduced to some form of feudalism as some predict, but be vibrant and sustainable states able to exercise sovereignty and control over their territories.

Africa must also strengthen its conflict negotiation and resolution capabilities and devise effective means of deploying its military to conflict zones within the shortest possible time. This hinges on training and logistics support for the troops. A way out of the logistics problems associated with African peacekeeping missions is to have a centralized logistics base or pool into which each country is mandated to contribute specified materiel over a period of time. These will then become handy to be used by troops on such missions. The US has embarked on a program to train African soldiers to enhance their capacity to undertake peacekeeping tasks on the continent. This program must be taken seriously in order to harmonize and standardize procedures that will enable them function as a coherent force when deployed.

The United Nations also has an important role to play in containing African conflicts. It took the organization almost nine years to bring a sanctions regime to bear on the Revolutionary United Front and Liberia, which were the local beneficiaries of the Sierra Leone conflict. No wonder the conflict abated in less than a year after the imposition of the sanctions and the banning of diamond exports from Liberia and Sierra Leone without official certification from the Sierra Leone government. Had the UN acted early enough, a lot more lives would have been saved and Sierra Leone would not have descended into the predicament in which it finds itself today. In the case of the DRC, the UN Report has not completely resolved the conflict as yet, though almost two years has elapsed since its publication. Yet it has at least brought some of the variables of the war to the limelight to enable governments of countries in which private companies are complicit in the conflicts to take steps to regulate their activities. Hopefully, the current ceasefire will hold for a long time, and will be the basis for a negotiated settlement.

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